GROUP DISCUSSION

June 16, 2024

SUMMER ON THE MOUNT

Retaliation Matthew 5:38-42 Pastor Matt Manning Matt.Manning@crossroadsabc.com



NOTES	Pastor Matt talked about how non-retaliation sets the stage for human flourishing—and offers us a chance to let go of the incessant need to defend our "image."
	MY STORY
	Describe an injustice you experienced where an eye-for-an-eye [or an eye-and-a-hand-and-a-foot-and-a-lawsuit] would have felt especially good.
	What hostile words, directed at you, would tempt you toward immediate retaliation?
	WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO HEAR?
	"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic,[a] let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. (Matthew 5:38-42)
	What has the words "eye-for-an-eye" meant to you? Why do some people want a little more in return for what they lost?

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard for the first time, stuck with you, challenged or confused you?

What is the one important thing you will take away from this weekend's message or our community group discussion? Is there any challenge, difficulty or praise that you would like to share with the group for prayer?

CROSSROADS

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Pastor Matt said ... "In Jesus' time the Rabbi's and Religious Leaders taught that an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, meant that you give them what they're due. That's the way it was being applied in Jesus' time. It had become a basis for a vendetta, sort of a biblical permission to have a grudge or to strike back."

What can the "obligation" to retaliate feel like?

In the time of Moses, as well as when Jesus referred to it, this principle meant to establish a guideline, in the context of courts and judges, to prevent individual pursuit of retribution and to promote judicious settlement for the victim—and to prevent the implementation of a "ten-fold" punishment.

What can be initially unsettling about what Jesus is teaching here? What is the ideal response of a hostile offender to your non-retaliation?

What is the difference between justice and revenge? Or justice and retaliation? When is it appropriate to just "let it go?"

What are some modern-day versions of being slapped on the cheek?

A few weeks ago, Pastor Matt pointed out that peacemakers weave back together the shalom of God in every part of life so that we can live the flourishing life together. How can your response of non-retaliation be a catalyst for this type of change in the world?

What does God want us to hear? Based on the passage and the questions above, what "takeaways" do you think God has revealed to you?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO?

There are instances when Christians today encounter scorn, their morals are belittled and mocked, and faith is not respected. In the face of that hostility, what helps us to respond with poise and grace? The instructions of these verses may seem preposterous in our modern culture's views. If challenged to explain the intention of Jesus' teaching here to someone seeking to know God, what would be most challenging part of that conversation?

What does God want us to do? Flowing out of our reading and interpretation, what action does this passage or the Spirit's leading, call us to?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

Take time to process what these verses meant to the people who listened to Jesus speak. Considering the oppression of Roman domination, imagine their difficulty in understanding what he asked of them.

Specifically identify how these verses translate into our time and culture, and how they translate into your own reality. Begin a mental list of when and where you can embrace the task to live them out in your daily life.

If we choose to hold personal rights and possessions loosely, if we begin to recognize that peace is not merely a cessation of conflict (a cease fire) but rather a pursuit of common purpose, namely human flourishing for everyone – even those consumed with hatred and hostility.

What does God want ME to do? What is the personal application and action step God is calling you, personally, toward?

